DOCUMENT RESUME

BD 052 131 SP 004 717

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TITLE Teacher Perceptions of Race, Socio-Economic Status

and Language Characteristics.

INSTITUTION Wisconsin State Univ., Whitewater. School of

Education.

PUB DATE 71 NOTE 24p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29

DESCRIPTORS *Expectation, *Language Patterns, Language Styles,

Race Influences, *Racial Attitudes, *Socioeconomic

Status, *Teacher Attitudes

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to find whether race, socio-economic status (SES) and language cues of speakers modify the ratings of white experienced teachers. Subjects were 250 white male and female experienced teachers whose responses were recorded on a semantic differential designed to assess teacher expectancies on two concepts: speaker and speaker's language. The experimental treatment consisted of an audio and audio-visual presentation of the speakers (two white and two black exhibiting lower and middle SES and speech claracteristics) to teachers via closed circuit television. Speakers were randomly presented reading a prepared statement on civil disobedience. An analysis of variance factorial design was used to test the hypotheses. The race and the SES and language factors independently elicited significantly different responses from the teachers, and the following interaction effects were also sognificant: 1) race x SES and language, 2) race x mode of presentation, and 3) race x SES x mode of presentation. The data indicated that black speakers were rated significantly less favorably than the white speakers matched on SES and language levels. Rated most negatively was the middle class black speaker, who seemed to have the most significant impact on the teachers' rating. The race of the speaker did not dominate initial impressions of teachers. However, the SES and language factor appeared to compound and magnify racial bias rather than to relieve it. (JS)



TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF RACE, SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND LANGUAGE CHARACTERISTICS

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The purpose of this study was to find whether race, socio-economic status (SES) and language cues of speakers modify the ratings of white experienced teachers. The speakers were Caucasian and Negro exhibiting lower and middle SES and speech characteristics. The Ss were 250 white male and female experienced teachers enrolled in the Graduate School of Education at Wisconsin State University-Superior. Responses were recorded on a semantic differential with two concepts assessed: Speaker and Speaker's Language.

The race and the SES and language factors independently elicited significantly different responses from the teachers and the following interaction effects were also significant: 1) race x SES and language, 2) race x mode of presentation, and 3) race x SES x mode of presentation. The data indicated that black speakers were rated significantly less favorable than the white speakers matched on SES and language levels. Rated most negatively was the middle class black speaker, who seemed to have the most significant impact on the teachers' ratings. The race of the speaker did not dominate initial impressions of teachers. However, the SES and language factor appeared to compound and magnify racial bias rather than to relieve it.

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF RACE, SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND LANGUAGE CHARACTERISTICS*

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Language has long been considered a major factor in interpersonal relations.

The manner in which one communicates as well as the words used are clues to the relationship which exists between the speaker and the receiver.

Education (schooling) is a highly verbal situation in which the teacher is the prime speaker. Her perception of the class may consciously/unconsciously direct the manner in which she communicates with the children. In turn, the children's perception of their teacher influences their manner of communication. Clark (1965) claims that teacher expectations can have a marked effect on the achievement levels of slum children. The teacher's expectations of the group will be reflected by the use of her language in class. Guskin (1970) investigated the social perception of language variation in relation to black dialect and expectation of ability. She reported that the black speaker and his language were rated less favorably and triggered lower expectations about his ability and future academic achievement.

^{*} Paper read at the American Educational Research Association Convention, New York, New York, February, 1971.



Research by social psychologists on social perception has indicated that physical characteristics of the speaker play a role in formulating an impression of the speaker. Physical cues may lead the perceiver to formulate inferences about the individual perceived, the personality and possible expectations of the individual. This concept was supported by Heider's research (1958).

Observational and research evidence has indicated that teachers, either black or white, often regard black children's speech as inferior. Students who feel that they might incur the teacher's disapproval, because of their speech patterns, are non-communicative in class but extremely verbal in their home environment.

Is it possible to tell "who a man is" from the way he talks? This is a simplicification of the research undertaken by Harms (1963) who reported that his subjects distinguished speakers according to their status. Most of the listeners reported making judgments of both status and credibility of the presentations heard after hearing only ten to fifteen seconds of a forty to sixty second presentation.

Naremore conducted a judgmental behavior study of white and negro inner city teachers when exposed to speech samples of 40 children of different social status, ethnicity and sex on two topics. Analyzing the results obtained from responses to a set of semantic differential scales, she reported that responses categorized teachers roughly along the lines of the teacher's race.

While data has been accumulated to establish rather clearly that race and language cues influence stereotypes toward racial and socio-economic status (SES) groups, the literature has not revealed interaction effects and degrees of intensity of race, language, and SES factors, all of which might contribute indepently or in various combinations to stereotype expectancies. The purpose of this study was to test the effects of race, language, and SES and to dis-

cover the propensity of each to influence expectancies of in-service teachers.

While teacher perceptions may vary with race, the variance might also be attributable to language and SES variables, which create or reinforce stereotypes. If teachers rate a middle SES black speaker they see (video mode) differently from the same speaker they only hear (auditory mode), than an argument for race as a discriminating factor in teacher perceptions is valid. Rowever, a black middle SES speaker might elicit more favorable responses from teachers than a white lower SES speaker. Also, a black lower SES speaker might elicit less favorable responses from teachers than a white lower SES speaker. It is possible that language and SES cues can overcome or compound and reinforce racial bias.

It was hypothesized that teacher perceptions would be attributable more to perceived discrepencies between self and speaker, a general factor of social distance. While race is likely to influence the initial impressions of teachers, it seems more likely that race is confounded with SES and language differences; therefore, the interaction of race with SES may contribute most significantly to the variation in in-service teacher perceptions. The present experiment was designed to isolate the factors of race from SES and language. However, SES and language were confounded in the same factor.

Specific hypotheses were: 1) racial cues of speakers will effect teacher perceptions significantly; 2) SES and language cues of speakers will effect teacher perceptions significantly; 3) race x SES and language interaction will be significant; 4) the three way interaction of race x SES and language x mode of presentation will be significant.

METHOD

To study these variables independently, the speakers' characteristics were isolated through monomodal (audio) and bimodal (audio-video) presentations.



The experimental treatments consisted of an audio or an audio-visual presentation of the speakers to the teachers via closed circuit television. Sound was used in all presentations but no picture was provided in the audio presentation. To control race, language and SES factors two black speakers and two white speakers were selected for videotaping and subsequent presentation to the teachers. The first black speaker exhibited lower SES and Negro racial cues: dark skin color, full lips, dominant bushy Afro-American hair style, heavy negroid speech characteristics, and dressed in a dark sweatshirt. The second black speaker exhibited middle SES and Negro racial cues: medium light skin color, full lips, black curly hair and moderately long sideburns, non-descript speech characteristics, and dressed in a white shirt, jacket, and tie.

The first white speaker exhibited lower SES and Caucasian racial cues: white skin, neck-length hair uncombed and disheveled, spoke in a somewhat slovenly fashion with a nasal quality, and dressed in an open denim jacket with a white t-shirt beneath. The second white speaker exhibited middle SES and Caucasian racial cues: white skin, neatly groomed hair, slight mid-western accent, and dressed in a white shirt, jacket, and tie.

The speakers were video-taped reading a prepared statement on civil disobedience (See Appendix A). The speakers were randomly presented to the
teachers and the responses were recorded on the semantic differential designed
to assess the teacher expectancies (See Appendix B). An analysis of variance,
factorial design was used to test the hypotheses that race, language and SES
contribute independently to teacher expectancies. The three factors and levels
of each were: 1) race (blacks and whites); 2) language (lower and middle SES);
and 3) mode of presentation (audio and audio-video).

The sample consisted of 250 white male and female experienced teachers enrolled in the Graduate School of Education at Wisconsin State University-



Superior. Period of service of the teachers ranged from one to thirty years and the teachers represented a wide array of teaching fields. The instrument used to observe the teacher perceptions were two semantic differential scales constructed to measure attitudes after listening or viewing and listening to the speakers who were previously recorded. The teachers were requested to respond to two concepts: "Speaker" and "Speaker's Language." Inter-item reliabilities among the items assessing "Speaker" ranged between .13 to .59 with a mean "z" transformation mean reliability of .41, and the mean "z" transformation correlation of item responses and total instrument scores was .62. Uniform instructions were given to each test group via a monoraul sound tape.

The present study was confined to initial impressions of teachers and are not pertinent to educational settings characterized by more profound interteacher or teacher-non-teacher relationships.

RESULTS

Initially, the data were organized to permit an analysis of variance of the composite scores of all 15 items on the semantic differential. Response values were accumulated for each item, and the pooled item responses was the unit of measurement for the composite analysis. The use of the composite item means represented a compromise between computing mean values for each teacher, which would serve to maximize the occurance of a Type II error, and the use of item means only, which would heightened the probability of committing a Type I error. However, item statistics were used to support findings in the composite item analysis.

Analysis of Composite Values

Composite mean responses of the teachers' impressions of the four speakers as they responded to the concept "Speaker" are reported in Table 1. Both



Table 1

SPEAKER PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS, COMPOSITE MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SPEAKERS

Speakers	Physical Characteristics	Composite Means	S.D.	
l a	Black: lower SES, dark skin, full lips, dominant bushy Afro-American hair style, dressed in a dark sweat shirt; audio presentation	4.45	1.66	
ъ	Black: same speaker with <u>audio-video</u> presentation	4.62	1.51	
2 a	Black: middle SES, medium light skin, full lips, black curly hair, moderate sideburns, dressed in white shirt, jacket and tie; audio presentation	3.93	1.63	
b	Black: same speaker with audio-video presentation	4.57	1.61	
3 a	White: lower SES, white skin, neck- length hair uncombed and disheveled, dressed in open denim jacket with white t-shirt: audio presentation	4.78	1.48	
b	White: same speaker with <u>audio-video</u> presentation	4.39	1.60	
4 a	White: middle SES, white skin, neatly groomed hair, dressed in white shirt, jacket and tie; audio presentation	4.80	1.34	
ь	White: same speaker with <u>audio-video</u> presentation	4.30	1.53	



٠,

presentations of each speaker (auditory and video modes) reveal that more positive ratings were recorded for the white speakers with one exception, the 4.30 mean rating for the middle class white. For the black speakers the means ranged between 3.93 and 4.62 while the white speakers received more positive ratings with composite means ranging from 4.30 to 4.80.

The composite item ratings on the instrument assessing the concept "Speaker's Language" are presented in Table 2. A perusal of the mean values reveals the same findings as reported for the responses to the concept "Speaker." Consistently, the black speakers' language were viewed more negatively than the whites' and the video mode improved the ratings of the blacks, but decreased the ratings of the whites. However, the mode of presentation differences were due to unsystematic variation.

The analysis of variance of the teachers' composite response to the 15 items of the concept "Speaker" is shown in Table 3. It may be seen that the F test detected significant differences in two of the main effect factors:

1) race and 2) SES and language. Significant differences in the interaction effects were detected in race x SES and race x mode of presentation. Two of the main effects and two interaction effects differences were significant at the .005 level. The three way interaction was significant at the .05 level.

The composite mean values of the main effect factors indicated that the black speakers, with a mean of 4.37, were seen more negatively than the white speakers, with a mean of 4.56, while the middle SES speakers were rated more negatively than the lower SES speakers. A further analysis of the interaction effect of race x SES and language will shed more light on the unexpected higher ratings for lower SES speakers.

The difference between the means of the middle and lower SES ratings of black speakers was significantly different from the difference between the means of the middle and lower SES ratings for white speakers. The slopes of



Table 2

SPEAKERS' SPEECH CHARACTERISTICS, COMPOSITE MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SPEAKER'S LANGUAGE

Speakers	Speech Characteristics	Composite Means	S.D.	
1 a	Black: heavy negroid speech; audio presentation	4.36	1.58	
Ъ	Black: same speaker; <u>audio-video</u> presentation	4. 64	1.58	
2 a	Black: non-descript speech; audio presentation	3.79	1.60	
Ъ	Black: same speaker; <u>audio-video</u> presentation	4.42	1.54	
3 a	White: slovenly speech with nasal quality; audio presentation	4.78	1.50	
ь	White: same speaker; <u>audio-video</u> presentation	4.44	1.50	
4 a	White: slight mid-Western speech; audio presentation	4.86	1.37	
ъ	White: same speaker with <u>audio-video</u> presentation	4.51	1.46	



the lines in Figure 1 show that the interaction effect was largely attributable to the marked low mean value of the black middle SES speaker as compared to the white middle SES speaker. It is apparent that the lower SES means were rated relatively high and were not influenced by the race of the speakers, since no appreciable change was indicated across the two races.

Middle class blacks were viewed by teachers less favorably than lower class blacks. It is interesting to note that SES and language seems to be a factor influencing teacher perceptions only in the presence of black speakers. The data suggest a kind of rejection of the black middle SES speaker compared to the teachers' ratings of the lower SES black speaker and the middle SES white speaker. It is possible that language and SES cues operated to compound and magnify racial bias rather than to overcome it.

Contrasting with the race x SES and language interaction was the interaction effect of race x mode of presentation (See Figure 2). While the race x SES interaction was attributable largely to the responses to the black speakers, the composite ratings provided evidence that the mode of presentation had opposite effects for white speakers than it had for black speakers. When the black speakers were only heard, the mean rating was lower, with a mean of 4.19, than when the same speakers were viewed in addition to being heard, with a mean of 4.60. On the other hand, white speakers presented auditorily received more positive ratings, with a mean of 4.80, than white speakers who were heard and viewed, with a mean of 4.35. Black speakers were rated more positively than white speakers when all the speakers were exposed visually to the teachers. Being seen and heard improved the black speakers' ratings while being only heard generated more positive ratings for the whites. Whether the ratings were due to the face factor or to the SES factor (physical traits such as clothes worn) is not clear. The race and SES interaction is displayed in Figure 2.

When the SES and language factor was held constant (See Figure 3), the differential effect described for the race and SES interaction was still

Table 3 ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF COMPOSITE TEACHER RATINGS OF SPEAKERS

Source of Variation	Sums of Squares	d.f.	Mean Squares	F
Between Speaker Presentations	281.847	7	40.263	16.61**
A: Race	32.981	1	32.981	13.61**
B: SES and Language	27.051	1	27.051	11.16**
C: Mode of Presentation	1.624	1	1.624	~-
AxB: Race x SES and Language	34.838	1	34.838	14.37**
FxC: Race x Mode of Presentation	167.959	1	167.959	69.29**
AxBxC: Race x SES x Mode	11.955	1	11.955	4.93*
Within Speaker Presentation	9,071.164	3742	2.424	
Total	9,353.011	3749		

^{*} significant at .05 level **significant at .005 level

Table 4 SIGNIFICANT F VALUES ON RACE FACTOR FOR TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO SPEAKER

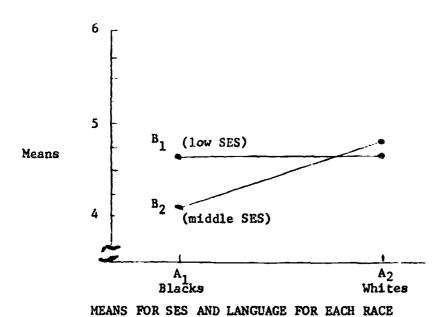
Variable Name	Black Speaker Mean	White Speaker Mean	F
DullBright	3.88	4.40	6.90*#
Slow thinker Fast thinker	3.56	4.40	17.90***
DisadvantagedAdvantaged	4.04	4.78	15.09***
UnpredictablePredictable	3.25	4.92	8.32***
UglyBeautiful	4.23	4.03	3.90*

^{*}significant at the .05 level **significant at the .01 level



^{***}significant at the .005 level

Figure 1



Means

C1 (audio mode)

C2 (audio-video mode)

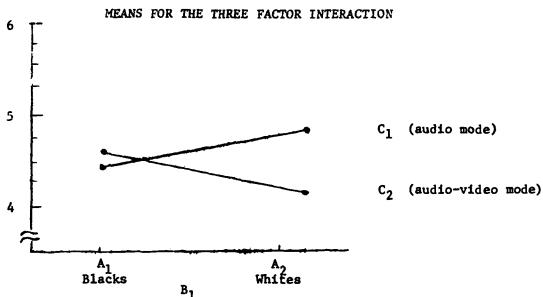
A1
Blacks

Whites

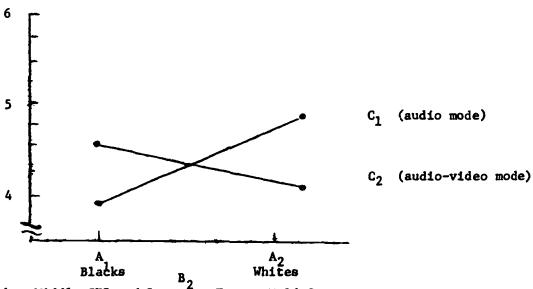


MEANS FOR MODE OF PRESENTATION FOR EACH RACE

Figure 3



B₁
Lower SES and Language Factor Held Constant



Middle SES and Language Factor Held Constant



operating for the race x presentation mode interaction. Differences were more pronounced for the middle class where the black middle SES speaker (Figure 3b) received the most positive ratings with a mean = 4.57 on the video mode compared to the same speaker presented via the audio mode, with a mean of 3.93. The white middle SES speaker was most favorably rated on the audio mode with a mean of 4.80 compared to his mean rating of 4.30 on the video mode. Again the low mean rating of the middle class black on the audio presentation was the distinguishing feature on the three factor interaction. The data suggest a differential response set for the races; a kind of compensatory response toward the blacks when the stimuli were clear, and conversely, a disappointment response to the white speakers when the visual image was revealed.

Analysis of Individual Item Values

In addition to the composite semantic differential scores, an analysis was made of the individual items. Responses to each item were used as the unit of measurement differing from the composite scores analysis only in that the latter considered the fifteen items pooled into one composite score.

Main effects. Significant F values for the race factor together with the means for black and white speakers is provided in Table 4. Consistent with the findings on the composite score analysis, the black speakers were seen significantly less positively than the white speakers, with one exception. Specifically, the blacks were rated more dull, slower thinkers, more disadvantaged, less predictable, but more beautiful. "Black is beautiful" may be more fact than slogan. Table 5 shows the black speakers' language were perceived to be more alienated, unpleasant, dull, slow thinking, disadvantaged, and unpredictable than their white speakers' language ratings. All of the ratings were significant at the .05 level or higher.



Separate items showing significant differences on the SES and language

factor were the items dull-bright and slow thinker-fast thinker for both concepts measured. The most positive mean values were found for the lower SES speakers with means of 4.50 and 4.40 for the two items respectively, and 3.78 and 3.57 mean values for the middle SES speakers for the same items, in that order, measuring the concept "Speaker." As previously pointed out, the differences were due almost entirely to the differences in the ratings of the black speakers. The differences between the lower and middle SES speaker ratings were significant at the .005 level.

Interaction effects. Significant differences were detected on several items on the teachers' ratings of "Speaker's Language." Table 6 is provided to show that the following items were found to be significantly different on the race x SES iteraction at the .005 level: violent-gentle, repulsive-attractive, and hostile-friendly. Two other items found significantly different at the .05 level were strange-familiar and ugly-beautiful.

Of all the F values computed in this experiment, the race and presentation mode interaction had the highest proportion of significant individual items, with ten of fifteen items emerging as significant. The relevant data are shown in Table 7. That the race of the speaker was dependent on whether or not the speaker could be seen, served to accentuate the influence of physical factors of the speakers on the teachers' perceptions. Since both race and physical traits were made clear with the video presentation, it may not be determined which single factor dominates. However, the significance of the three-way interactions present evidence that each of the factos are confounded and may not always influence teacher perceptions independently.

The F values for the three-way interaction of race x SES x mode of presentation are displayed in Table 8 together with the confidence levels. The highest interaction occurred on the dull-bright item with a significant difference found at the .005 level. With the mode of presentation held constant,



Table 5

SIGNIFICANT F VALUES ON RACE FACTOR FOR TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO "SPEAKER'S LANGUAGE"

Variable Name	Black Speaker Mean	White Speaker Mean	F
AlienatedFree	3.90	4.42	5.43*
Unpleasant Pleasant	4.23	4.77	7.44**
BadGood	4.30	5.01	13.23***
DullBright	3.68	4.36	11.10***
Slow thinker Fast thinker	3.62	4.50	21.00***
DisadvantagedAdvantaged	4.43	4.89	5.09*

^{*}significant at the .05 level **significant at the .01 level

Table 6

SIGNIFICANT F VALUES FOR INTERACTION OF RACE AND SES FOR TEACHERS'
RESPONSES TO "SPEAKER'S LANGUAGE"

Variable Name	F Value
ViolentGentle	9.30***
RepulsiveAttractive	9.70***
HostileFriendly	10.44***
StrangeFamiliar	4.47*
UglyBeautiful	4.88*

^{*}significant at the .05 level
***significant at the .005 level



^{***}significant at the .005 level

Table 7

SIGNIFICANT F VALUES FOR INTERACTION OF RACE AND PRESENTATION MODE FOR TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO "SPEAKER"

Variable Name	F Value
UnpleasantPleasant	15.21***
BadGood	3.88*
DullBright	11.07**
MysteriousUnderstandable	5.10*
Slow thinkerFast thinker	5.22*
RepulsiveAttractive	15.26***
HostileFriendly	8.09***
StrangeFamiliar	14.17***
UglyBeautiful	6.58*
RejectAccept	4.67*

*significant at the .05 level **significant at the .01 level ***significant at the .005 level

Table 8

SIGNIFICANT F VALUES FOR INTERACTION OF RACE, SES, AND PRESENTATION MODE FOR TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO "SPEAKER"

Variable Name	F Value
AlienatedFree	5.33*
UntrustworthyTrustworthy	7.12**
DullBright	8.08***
ViolentGentle	4.74*
DisadvantagedAdvantaged	4.06*

*significant at the .05 level
**significant at the .01 level
**significant at the .005 level



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the teachers' perceptions were dependent upon the SES and language, and race of the speakers.

DISCUSSION

While many people have asserted that teachers (and others) make discriminations in their initial impressions of persons based largely on race, this experiment provides evidence that SES and language are also a powerful factor. Data supporting the race factor as a determinant in teacher perceptions of persons were 1) the significant and consistent higher ratings of the white speakers and white speaker's language, and 2) the obvious more negative ratings of the middle SES black speaker compared to the lower SES black speaker and both white speakers. In this regard, it is difficult to deny the views of this sample of teachers as they characterized the black speakers as more dull, slower thinking, more disadvantaged, less predictable, and similarily, for black speakers' language, than their counterpart white speakers matched on SES and language style. However, race was not the only factor influencing teachers' perceptions.

Significant differences in the teachers' ratings of the speakers from lower and middle SES and language backgrounds coupled with the significant interaction effects suggest that race was not a pure factor guiding the teachers' impressions. The ratings of the lower SES speakers over the middle SES speakers was puzzling. However, it may be partially explained by the fact that the relatively low ratings assigned to the middle SES speakers was a function of the impact of the middle class black. Perhaps the teachers empathized with the lower SES black, and maintained their distance with respect to the middle SES black speaker. The data indicated that it is the middle SES black speaker who made the significant impression on the teachers, not the lower SES black speaker nor the whites.

The similar response of the teachers to the language of the speakers on the mode of presentation point to a kind of "understanding quality" on the part



of the teachers toward varying speech characteristics. Both black and white speakers were rated similarly when only the voice was heard by the teachers. Several plausable explanations could account for this finding: 1) the audio presentation was ambiguous and the teachers gave the "benefit of the doubt" to the speaker in their ratings; 2) the constant content of the reading elicited similar ratings from the teachers which were independent of race and SES factors; and 3) speech characteristics were not a factor in modifying teachers' perceptions of speakers.

The first explanation is purely speculative. The second explanation is not acceptable as the teachers were found to have responded differentially to the speakers on both race and SES factors. In light of the present data the third seems most plausible, since the main effect factor of mode of presentation was found to be non-significant.

The research hypotheses of the present experiment were supported, as the factors of race and SES and language were found to modify the perceptions of teachers to speakers bearing variations of these traits, and since the responses were a function largely of the interaction of race with SES and language, race with mode of presentation, and race with SES and language with mode of presentation.

IMPLICATIONS

The results of the study have implications for teacher training. Teachers ought to be made aware of the possibilities of SES and language factors working insidiously to compound racial bias. Undergraduate teacher training institutions, as well as in-service educational programs, ought to assign high priority to non-cognitive factors to minimize the crippling forces of race and class prejudice. Concerted efforts should be invested in planning teacher training curricula that would provide the kinds of experiences that would bring together the whites and the blacks, the lower and middle SES teachers and



students on mutually benefiting projects. However, before functional programs can be created to combat people to people bias, new efforts are needed to better understand what kinds of educational experiences break down prejudice in teachers, what kinds of teachers respond best under what kind of mixed race and class settings, and if prolonged exposure across racial and class lines do tend to relieve tensions.



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APPENDIX A

SPEAKER.

alienated		::_		·	free
untrustworthy	:	_::_			trustworthy
unpleasant		::_	<u> </u>		pleasant
bad		_::_	:	·	good
bright	::	_::_	:	:	dull
gentle	*				violent
mysterious		_::_			understandable
slow thinker					fast thinker
attractive		::			repulsive
friendly				·	hostile
disadvantaged		_::_	:		advantaged
unpredictable		_::_		·	predictable
familiar	•				strange
ugly		::		·	beautiful
accept					reject



SPEAKER'S LANGUAGE

alienated	:	:	:	_:	:	:	free
untrustworth	:	;	·	:	:	_:	trustworthy
unpleasant	:_	:	:	:	······································	:	pleas nt
bad	:_		:	:	:	:	good
bright	i	:	;	:	:	_:	dull
gentle	*	:	:	:	:	:	violent
mysterious		:	:	:			understandable
slow thinker		:	:	:	:	_:	fast thinker
attractive		:	:	;	:	_:	repulsive
friendly		:		:	:	_:	hostile
disadvantaged	مين ا		:	:	:	;	advantage
unpredictable		:		:		_:	predictable
familiar			:	:	:		strange
ugly		;	:	:	:		beautiful
accept		:	:. <u></u>	:	:	:	reject



APPENDIX B

SPEECH READ BY ALL SPEAKERS

Hello

I'd like to talk to you about civil disobedience. First of all, let us distinguish between civil disobedience and civil disorder. The basic characteristics of civil disobedience are non-violence and respect for law. Under the principles of civil disobedience the individual must subject himself to the law and expect to be punished, if he violates a law which is ruled constitutional. Illegal mass strikes in which the participants do not expect to be punished, or violent riots in which the rioters attempt to escape are examples of civil disorder. Civil disobedience, on the other hand, as advocated by Gandhi and Thoreau, are passive demonstrations against laws which are believed to be unjust. Not only is civil disobedience moral, it is the only legal method through which the consititutionality of an alleged unjust law can be tested. A legal interest must be established before a law can be challenged. Civil disobedience advocates acknowledge that the state must have a monopoly of force, but yet a moral man cannot obey an immoral law. The 'War Crimes' trials of the late 1940's established the legal principle that moral responsibility cannot be avoided by the individual. It is not enough to merely "follow orders."

Thank you for your time.

